

REMARKS

The Office Action dated September 27, 2005 has been received and carefully considered. In this response, claims 1, 10, 11 and 22 have been amended, claims 2-9, 17, 23, 24 and 27 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, and claims 41-45 have been added. The amendments to the claims do not narrow the scope of the claims and support for the amendments may be found in the specification and drawings as originally filed. Reconsideration of the outstanding rejections in the present application is respectfully requested based on the following remarks.

Allowability of Claims 3-17, 19-21, 24, 26-31, and 37-40

The Applicants note with appreciation the indication at page 3 of the Office Action that claims 37-40 are allowed and that claims 3-17, 19-21, 24 and 26-31 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the features of the base claim and any intervening claims. In an effort to advance the present application to issuance, the Applicants have amended the claims consistent with the indicated allowable subject matter. In this response, independent claim 1 has been amended to recite the additional subject matter of allowable claims 5-8 and intervening claim 2 and independent claim 22 has been amended to recite the additional subject matter of allowable claim 24 and intervening claim 23. Additionally, new claims 41-45 have been added, where new claim 41 has substantially the same scope as allowable claim 4, new claim 42 has substantially the same scope as allowable claim 9, new claim 43 has substantially the same scope as allowable claim 27, new claim 44 has substantially the same scope as allowable claim 3, and new claim 45 has substantially the same scope as allowable claim 17. Accordingly, the pending claims should be allowable for at least the reasons indicated by the Office Action.

Anticipation Rejection of Claims 1, 2, 22 and 23

At page 2 of the Office Action, claims 1, 2, 22 and 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Chen (U.S. Patent No. 6,683,815). As noted above, independent claims 1 and 22 have been amended to recite the additional subject matter of allowable claims 5-8 and 24, respectively, thereby obviating this rejection. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection therefore is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

The Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance, and an early indication of the same is courteously solicited. The Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned by telephone at the below listed telephone number in order to expedite resolution of any issues and to expedite passage of the present application to issue, if any comments, questions, or suggestions arise in connection with the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees that may be required, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account Number 50-2469.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date



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